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16 Meriden Road  
Rockfall  
Connecticut 06481-2961  
Tele: 860-346-TREE  
www.ctwoodlands.org

*Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association*

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Support/ Oppose
<b>PROPOSED BILL 186:</b> AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF A MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE REGULATING THE OPERATION OR USE OF A DIRT BIKE OR ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE.	Support

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For 120 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on sustainable forestry, state parks and forests, trail recreation, natural resource protection, and land conservation issues.

I want to thank the Co-Chairs for raising Proposed Bill 186 which would give a significant deterrent to municipalities who wish to take action to reduce the improper use of dirt bikes or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

CFPA and our volunteers maintain over 825 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails that extend through 96 towns and cross private, municipal, and state lands. Volunteers spent almost 30,000 hours in 2014 to maintain these trails for the use and enjoyment of the public for free. ATVs are not allowed on these trails for several reasons: 1) ATVs can cause considerable erosion problems for trails, 2) ATVs can damage sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitats, and 3) ATVs are not only dangerous to the riders themselves, but they create significant personal safety issues and other conflicts with legal trail users. Unfortunately, many inconsiderate ATV riders trespass and use the trails anyway, and statewide ATV trail abuse is probably the #1 trail management problem we face.

Proposed Bill 186 would give each municipality the option to enact its own ordinance if it wishes to take action against ATV or dirt bike violators at some point in the future. In order to stop trail abuse, property destruction, and other violations by ATV and dirt bike riders, it makes sense to enable local and state authorities to have this common-sense deterrent.

Thank you for allowing this important bill to have a public hearing, and for the opportunity to testify. I would be glad to respond to any questions you may have.